

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: TIMOTHY LEARY

a candid conversation with the controversial ex-harvard professor, prime partisan and prophet of LSD

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in 1960, beside the swimming pool of his rented summer villa in Cuernavaca, a 39-year-old American ate a handful of odd-looking mushrooms he'd bought from the witch doctor of a nearby village. Within minutes, he recalled later, he felt himself "being swept over the edge of a sensory niagara into a maelstrom of transcendental visions and hallucinations. The next five hours could be described in many extravagant metaphors, but it was above all and without question the deepest religious experience of my life." The implications of that fateful first communion are as yet unmeasured; that they are both far-reaching and profound, however, is generally conceded—for the fungi were the legendary "sacred mushrooms" that have since become known, and feared by many, as one of the psychedelic (literally, mind-manifesting) chemicals that have created a national fad among the nation's young and a scandal in the press. The American was a Harvard psychotherapist named Timothy Leary, who has since found himself transmogrified from scientist and researcher into progenitor and high priest of a revolutionary movement spawned not by an idea but by a substance that's been called "the spiritual equivalent of the hydrogen bomb."

Few men, in their youth, would have seemed less likely to emerge as a religious leader, let alone as a rebel with a cause. At the age of 19, Leary distressed

his Roman Catholic mother by abandoning Holy Cross two years before graduation ("The scholastic approach to religion didn't turn me on"), then affronted his father, a retired Army career officer, by walking out of West Point after 18 months ("My interests were philosophic rather than militaristic"). Not until he transferred to the University of Alabama did he begin to settle down academically—to work for his B. A. in psychology. On graduation in 1942, he enlisted as an Army psychologist, served in a Pennsylvania hospital until the end of the War, then resumed his schooling and earned his Ph. D. at the University of California at Berkeley. Acquiring both eminence and enemies with his first major jobs—as director of Oakland's progressive Kaiser Foundation Hospital and as an assistant professor at UC's School of Medicine in San Francisco—Leary began to display the courage and sometimes rash iconoclasm that have since marked every phase of his checkered career. Contending that traditional psychiatric methods were hurting as many patients as they helped, he resigned in 1958 and signed up as a lecturer on clinical psychology at Harvard. There he began to evolve and enunciate the theory of social interplay and personal behavior as so many stylized games, since popularized by Dr. Eric Berne in his best-selling book "Games People Play," and to both preach and practice the effective but unconventional new psychiatric research technique of sending his students to study emotional

problems such as alcoholism where they germinate—rather than in the textbook or the laboratory.

At the time, predictably enough, few of these novel notions went over very well with Leary's hidebound colleagues. But their rumblings of skepticism rose to a chorus of outrage when Leary returned to Harvard in 1960 from his pioneering voyage into inner space—beside the swimming pool in Cuernavaca—to begin experimenting on himself, his associates and hundreds of volunteer subjects with measured doses of psilocybin, the chemical derivative of the sacred mushrooms. Vowing "to dedicate the rest of my life as a psychologist to the systematic exploration of this new instrument," he and his rapidly multiplying followers began to turn on with the other psychedelics: morning-glory seeds, nutmeg, marijuana, peyote, mescaline—and a colorless, odorless, tasteless but incredibly potent laboratory compound called LSD 25, first synthesized in 1938 by a Swiss biochemist seeking a pain killer for migraine headaches. A hundred times stronger than psilocybin, LSD sent its hallucinated users on multihued, multileveled roller-coaster rides so spectacular that it soon became Leary's primary tool for research. And as word began to circulate about the fantastic, phantasmagorical "trips" taken by his students, it soon became a clandestine campus kick, and by 1962 had become an underground cult among the



"In 3000 people that I have personally observed taking LSD, we've had only four cases of prolonged psychoses—two or three weeks after the session. All of these had been in a mental hospital before."



"An enormous amount of energy from every fiber of your body is released under LSD—especially sexual energy. There is no question that LSD is the most powerful aphrodisiac ever discovered by man."



"I think that anyone who wants to have a psychedelic experience and is willing to prepare for it and to examine his own hang-ups and neurotic tendencies should be allowed to have a crack at it."

young avant-garde from London to Los Angeles.

By 1963, it had also become something of an embarrassment to Harvard, however, which "regretfully" dismissed Leary, and his colleague Dr. Richard Alpert, in order to stem the rising tide of avid undergraduate interest in the drug. Undaunted, they organized a privately financed research group called the International Foundation for Internal Freedom (IFIF), and set up a psychedelic study center in Zihuatanejo, Mexico; but before they could resume full-scale LSD sessions, the Mexican government stepped in, anticipating adverse popular reaction, and demanded that they leave the country.

Leary had now become not only the messiah but the martyr of the psychedelic movement. But soon afterward came a dramatic 11th-hour reprieve from a young New York millionaire named William Hitchcock, a veteran LSD voyager who believed in the importance of Leary's work—by now a mission—and toward that end turned over to him a rambling mansion on his 4000-acre estate in Millbrook, New York, which has since become not only Leary's home and headquarters but also a kind of shrine and sanctuary for psychedelic pilgrims from all over the world. On April 16 of this year, it also became a target for further harassment by what Leary calls "the forces of middle-aged, middle-class authority." Late that night, a squad of Dutchess County police descended on the place, searched it from top to bottom, found a minute quantity of marijuana, and arrested four people—including Leary. If convicted, he could be fined heavily and sent to prison for 16 years. Already appealing another conviction, Leary had been arrested in Laredo the previous December as he was about to enter Mexico for a vacation, when Customs officials searched his car and found a half ounce of marijuana in the possession of his 18-year-old daughter. Despite his claim that the drug was for scientific and sacramental use in the furtherance of his work and his spiritual beliefs (as a practicing Hindu), he was fined \$30,000 and sentenced to 30 years in prison for transporting marijuana and failing to pay the Federal marijuana tax.

In the months since then, the LSD controversy has continued to escalate along with Leary's notoriety—spurred by a spate of headline stories about psychedelic psychoses, dire warnings of "instant insanity" from police and public health officials, and pious editorials inveighing against the evils of the drug. In May and June, two Senate subcommittees conducted widely publicized public hearings on LSD; and three states—California, Nevada and New Jersey—enacted laws prohibiting its illicit use, possession, distribution or manufacture. With a ringing appeal for still more stringent legislation on a Federal level, Ronald

Reagan even dragged the issue into his successful campaign for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in California.

It was amid this mounting outcry against the drug that *PLAYBOY* asked Dr. Leary to present his side of the psychedelic story—and to answer a few pertinent questions about its putative promise and its alleged perils. Consenting readily, he invited us to visit him in Millbrook, where we found him a few days later reciting Hindu morning prayers with a group of guests in the kitchen of the 64-room mansion. He greeted us warmly and led the way to a third-floor library. Instead of sitting down in one of the room's well-worn easy chairs, he crossed the room, stepped out of an open window onto a tin roof over a second-floor bay window, and proceeded to stretch out on a double-width mattress a few feet from the edge. While we made ourselves comfortable at the other end of the mattress, he opened his shirt to the warm summer sun, propped his bare feet against the shingles, looked down at the mansion's vast rolling meadow of a lawn, listened for a moment to the song of a chickadee in the branches of a tree nearby, and then turned, ready for our first question.

PLAYBOY: How many times have you used LSD, Dr. Leary?

LEARY: Up to this moment, I've had 311 psychedelic sessions.

PLAYBOY: What do you think it's done for you—and to you?

LEARY: That's difficult to answer easily. Let me say this: I was 39 when I had my first psychedelic experience. At that time, I was a middle-aged man involved in the middle-aged process of dying. My joy in life, my sensual openness, my creativity were all sliding downhill. Since that time, six years ago, my life has been renewed in almost every dimension. Most of my colleagues at the University of California and at Harvard, of course, feel that I've become an eccentric and a kook. I would estimate that fewer than 15 percent of my professional colleagues understand and support what I'm doing. The ones who do, as you might expect, tend to be among the younger psychologists. If you know a person's age, you know what he's going to think and feel about LSD. Psychedelic drugs are the medium of the young. As you move up the age scale—into the 30s, 40s and 50s—fewer and fewer people are open to the possibilities that these chemicals offer.

PLAYBOY: Why is that?

LEARY: To the person over 35 or 40, the word "drug" means one of two things: doctor-disease or dope fiend-crime. Nothing you can say to a person who has this neurological fix on the word "drug" is going to change his mind. He's frozen like a Pavlovian dog to this conditioned reflex. To people under 25, on the other hand, the word "drug" refers to

a wide range of mind benders running from alcohol, energizers and stupefiers to marijuana and the other psychedelic drugs. To middle-aged America, it may be synonymous with instant insanity, but to most Americans under 25, the psychedelic drug means ecstasy, sensual unfolding, religious experience, revelation, illumination, contact with nature. There's not a teenager or young person in the United States today who doesn't know at least one person who has had a good experience with marijuana or LSD. The horizons of the current younger generation, in terms of expanded consciousness, are light-years beyond those of their parents. The breakthrough has occurred; there's no going back. The psychedelic battle is won.

PLAYBOY: Why, then, have you called for a one-year "cease-fire" on the use of LSD and marijuana?

LEARY: Because there have never been two generations of human beings so far apart—living essentially in two different worlds, speaking two different languages—as the people under 25 and the older generation. Evolutionary misunderstanding causes bloodshed and imprisonment. To relieve this situation, I've asked the younger generation to cool it for a year and to use this moratorium period to explain to their parents—and to their jailers—what LSD and marijuana are, and why we want and intend to use them. I have made clear that this is a voluntary waiving of the constitutional right to change your own consciousness. But I suggested this as a conciliatory gesture to mollify and educate the older generation and to allow time for the younger people to learn more about how to turn on. I'm demanding that this period also be a moratorium on hysterical legislation and on punitive arrests of young people for the possession of LSD and marijuana. If, at the end of one year, the older generation has not taken advantage of this cease-fire, I predict and indeed urge a firm statement on the part of everyone involved that they intend to resume the use of psychedelics, to exercise their constitutional right to expand their own consciousness—whatever the cost.

PLAYBOY: What do you say to the standard charge that LSD is too powerful and dangerous to entrust to the young?

LEARY: Well, none of us yet knows exactly how LSD can be used for the growth and benefit of the human being. It is a powerful releaser of energy as yet not fully understood. But if I'm confronted with the possibility that a 15-year-old or a 50-year-old is going to use a new form of energy that he doesn't understand, I'll back the 15-year-old every time. Why? Because a 15-year-old is going to use a new form of energy to have fun, to intensify sensation, to make love, for curiosity, for personal growth. Many 50-year-olds have lost their curiosity, have lost their ability to make love, have

dulled their openness to new sensations, and would use any form of new energy for power, control and warfare. So it doesn't concern me at all that young people are taking time out from the educational and occupational assembly lines to experiment with consciousness, to dabble with new forms of experience and artistic expression. The present generation under the age of 25 is the wisest and holiest generation that the human race has ever seen. And, by God, instead of lamenting, derogating and imprisoning them, we should support them, listen to them and turn on with them.

PLAYBOY: If we wanted to take you up on that last suggestion, how would we go about it?

LEARY: Find a beloved friend who knows where to get LSD and how to run a session; or find a trusted and experienced LSD voyager to guide you on a trip.

PLAYBOY: Is it necessary to have a guide?

LEARY: Yes. Unless you have an experienced guide—at least for your first 10 or 15 sessions—it would be extremely reckless.

PLAYBOY: What if a person can't find either a guide or a source of LSD among his friends? Where does he go?

LEARY: LSD is against the law, and I certainly would not advise anyone to violate the law. I will say this, however: Throughout human history, men who have wanted to expand their consciousness, to find deeper meaning inside themselves, have been able to do it if they were willing to commit the time and energy to do so. In other times and countries, men would walk barefooted 2000 miles to find spiritual teachers who would turn them on to Buddha, Mohammed or Ramakrishna.

PLAYBOY: If you can't say where one could buy LSD, can you tell us the formula for making it? We understand it can be synthesized in any well-equipped chemical laboratory.

LEARY: That's true. But it would be irresponsible of me to reveal it. The unauthorized manufacture of LSD is now against the law.

PLAYBOY: Assuming you can get it, how do you take it? Can it be injected, or is it mostly just swallowed in a sugar cube?

LEARY: It can be injected or it can come in the form of powder or pills or in a solution, which is odorless, tasteless and colorless. In any case, you're dealing with a very minute quantity. One hundred micrograms is a moderate dose.

PLAYBOY: For a session lasting how long?

LEARY: Eight to twelve hours.

PLAYBOY: What's it like? What happens to you?

LEARY: If we're speaking in a general way, what happens to everyone is the experience of incredible acceleration and intensification of all senses and of all mental processes—which can be very confusing if you're not prepared for it. Around a thousand million signals fire

off in your brain every second; during any second in an LSD session, you find yourself tuned in on thousands of these messages that ordinarily you don't register consciously. And you may be getting an incredible number of simultaneous messages from different parts of your body. Since you're not used to this, it can lead to incredible ecstasy or it can lead to confusion. Some people are freaked by this niagara of sensory input. Instead of having just one or two or three things happening in tidy sequence, you're suddenly flooded by hundreds of lights and colors and sensations and images, and you can get quite lost.

You sense a strange, powerful force beginning to unloose and radiate through your body. In normal perception, we are aware of static symbols. But as the LSD effect takes hold, everything begins to *move*, and this relentless, impersonal, slowly swelling movement will continue through the several hours of the session. It's as though for all of your normal waking life you have been caught in a still photograph, in an awkward, stereotyped posture; suddenly the show comes alive, balloons out to several dimensions and becomes irradiated with color and energy.

The first thing you notice is an incredible enhancement of sensory awareness. Take the sense of sight. LSD vision is to normal vision as normal vision is to the picture on a badly tuned television set. Under LSD, it's as though you have microscopes up to your eyes, in which you see jewellike, radiant details of anything your eye falls upon. You are really seeing for the first time—not static, symbolic perception of learned things, but patterns of light bouncing off the objects around you and hurtling at the speed of light into the mosaic of rods and cones in the retina of your eye. Everything seems alive. Everything is alive, beaming diamond-bright light waves into your retina.

PLAYBOY: Is the sense of hearing similarly intensified?

LEARY: Tremendously. Ordinarily we hear just isolated sounds: the rings of a telephone, the sound of somebody's words. But when you turn on with LSD, the organ of Corti in your inner ear becomes a trembling membrane seething with tattoos of sound waves. The vibrations seem to penetrate deep inside you, swell and burst there. You hear one note of a Bach sonata, and it hangs there, glittering, pulsating, for an endless length of time, while you slowly orbit around it. Then, hundreds of years later, comes the second note of the sonata, and again, for hundreds of years, you slowly drift around the two notes, observing the harmony and the discords, and reflecting on the history of music.

But when your nervous system is turned on with LSD, and all the wires are flashing, the senses begin to overlap

and merge. You not only hear but *see* the music emerging from the speaker system—like dancing particles, like squirming curls of toothpaste. You actually *see* the sound, in multicolored patterns, while you're hearing it. At the same time, you *are* the sound, you are the note, you are the string of the violin or the piano. And every one of your organs is pulsating and having orgasms in rhythm with it.

PLAYBOY: What happens to the sense of taste?

LEARY: Taste is intensified, too, although normally you won't feel like eating during an LSD session, any more than you feel like eating when you take your first solo at the controls of a supersonic jet. Although if you eat after a session, there is an appreciation of all the particular qualities of food—its texture and resiliency and viscosity—such as we are not conscious of in a normal state of awareness.

PLAYBOY: How about the sense of smell?

LEARY: This is one of the most overwhelming aspects of an LSD experience. It seems as though for the first time you are breathing life, and you remember with amusement and distaste that plastic, odorless, artificial gas that you used to consider air. During the LSD experience, you discover that you're actually inhaling an atmosphere composed of millions of microscopic strands of olfactory ticker tape, exploding in your nostrils with ecstatic meaning. When you sit across the room from a woman during an LSD session, you're aware of thousands of penetrating chemical messages floating from her through the air into your sensory center: a symphony of a thousand odors that all of us exude at every moment—the shampoo she uses, her cologne, her sweat, the exhaust and discharge from her digestive system, her sexual perfume, the fragrance of her clothing—grenades of eroticism exploding in the olfactory cell.

PLAYBOY: Does the sense of touch become equally erotic?

LEARY: Touch becomes electric as well as erotic. I remember a moment during one session in which my wife leaned over and lightly touched the palm of my hand with her finger. Immediately a hundred thousand end cells in my hand exploded in soft orgasm. Ecstatic energies pulsed up my arms and rocketed into my brain, where another hundred thousand cells softly exploded in pure, delicate pleasure. The distance between my wife's finger and the palm of my hand was about 50 miles of space, filled with cotton candy, infiltrated with thousands of silver wires hurtling energy back and forth. Wave after wave of exquisite energy pulsed from her finger. Wave upon wave of ethereal tissue rapture—delicate, shuddering—coursed back and forth from her finger to my palm.

PLAYBOY: And this rapture was erotic?

LEARY: Transcendentally. An enormous amount of energy from every fiber of your body is released under LSD—most especially including sexual energy. There is no question that LSD is the most powerful aphrodisiac ever discovered by man.

PLAYBOY: Would you elaborate?

LEARY: I'm saying simply that sex under LSD becomes miraculously enhanced and intensified. I don't mean that it simply generates genital energy. It doesn't automatically produce a longer erection. Rather, it increases your sensitivity a thousand percent. Let me put it this way: Compared with sex under LSD, the way you've been making love—no matter how ecstatic the pleasure you think you get from it—is like making love to a department-store-window dummy. In sensory and cellular communion on LSD, you may spend a half hour making love with eyeballs, another half hour making love with breath. As you spin through a thousand sensory and cellular organic changes, she does, too. Ordinarily, sexual communication involves one's own chemicals, pressure and interactions of a very localized nature—in what the psychologists call the erogenous zones. A vulgar, dirty concept, I think. When you're making love under LSD, it's as though every cell in your body—and you have trillions—is making love with every cell in her body. Your hand doesn't caress her skin but sinks down into and merges with ancient dynamos of ecstasy within her.

PLAYBOY: How often have you made love under the influence of LSD?

LEARY: Every time I've taken it. In fact, that is what the LSD experience is all about. Merging, yielding, flowing, union, communion. It's all lovemaking. You make love with candlelight, with sound waves from a record player, with a bowl of fruit on the table, with the trees. You're in pulsating harmony with all the energy around you.

PLAYBOY: Including that of a woman?

LEARY: The three inevitable goals of the LSD session are to discover and make love with God, to discover and make love with yourself, and to discover and make love with a woman. You can't make it with yourself unless you've made it with the timeless energy process around you, and you can't make it with a woman until you've made it with yourself. The natural and obvious way to take LSD is with a member of the opposite sex, and an LSD session that does not involve an ultimate merging with a person of the opposite sex isn't really complete. One of the great purposes of an LSD session is sexual union. The more expanded your consciousness—the farther out you can move beyond your mind—the deeper, the richer, the longer and more meaningful your sexual communion.

PLAYBOY: We've heard about sessions in which couples make love for hours on end, to the point of exhaustion, but never seem to reach exhaustion. Is this true?

LEARY: Inevitably.

PLAYBOY: Can you describe the sensation of an orgasm under LSD?

LEARY: Only the most reckless poet would attempt that. I have to say to you, "What does one say to a little child?" The child says, "Daddy, what is sex like?" and you try to describe it, and then the little child says, "Well, is it fun like the circus?" and you say, "Well, not exactly like that." And the child says, "Is it fun like chocolate ice cream?" and you say, "Well, it's like that but much, much more than that." And the child says, "Is it fun like the roller coaster, then?" and you say, "Well, that's part of it, but it's even more than that." In short, I can't tell you what it's like, because it's not like anything that's ever happened to you—and there aren't words adequate to describe it, anyway. You won't know what it's like until you try it yourself—and then I won't need to tell you.

PLAYBOY: We've heard that some women who ordinarily have difficulty achieving orgasm find themselves capable of multiple orgasms under LSD. Is that true?

LEARY: In a carefully prepared, loving LSD session, a woman will inevitably have several hundred orgasms.

PLAYBOY: Several hundred?

LEARY: Yes. Several hundred.

PLAYBOY: What about a man?

LEARY: This preoccupation with the number of orgasms is a hang-up for many men and women. It's as crude and vulgar a concept as wondering how much she paid for the negligee.

PLAYBOY: Still, there must be some sort of physiological comparison. If a woman can have several hundred orgasms, how many can a man have under optimum conditions?

LEARY: It would depend entirely on the amount of sexual—and psychedelic—experience the man has had. I can speak only for myself and about my own experience. I can only compare what I was with what I am now. In the last six years, my openness to, my responsiveness to, my participation in every form of sensory expression has multiplied a *thousandfold*.

PLAYBOY: This aspect of LSD has been hinted at privately but never spelled out in public until now. Why?

LEARY: The sexual impact is, of course, the open but private secret about LSD, which none of us has talked about in the last few years. It's socially dangerous enough to say that LSD helps you find divinity and helps you discover yourself. You're already in trouble when you say that. But then if you announce that the psychedelic experience is basically a *sexual* experience, you're asking to bring the whole middle-aged, middle-class monolith down on your head. At the

present time, however, I'm under a 30-year sentence of imprisonment, which for a 45-year-old man is essentially a life term; and in addition, I am under indictment on a second marijuana offense involving a 16-year sentence. Since there is hardly anything more that middle-aged, middle-class authority can do to me—and since the secret is out anyway among the young—I feel I'm free at this moment to say what we've never said before: that sexual ecstasy is the basic reason for the current LSD boom. When Dr. Goddard, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, announced in a Senate hearing that ten percent of our college students are taking LSD, did you ever wonder why? Sure, they're discovering God and meaning; sure, they're discovering themselves; but did you really think that sex wasn't the fundamental reason for this surging, youthful social boom? You can no more do research on LSD and leave out sexual ecstasy than you can do microscopic research on tissue and leave out cells.

LSD is not an automatic trigger to sexual awakening, however. The first ten times you take it, you might not be able to have a sexual experience at all, because you're so overwhelmed and delighted—or frightened and confused—by the novelty; the idea of having sex might be irrelevant or incomprehensible at the moment. But it depends upon the setting and the partner. It is almost inevitable, if a man and his mate take LSD together, that their sexual energies will be unimaginably intensified, and unless clumsiness or fright on the part of one or the other blocks it, it will lead to a deeper experience than they ever thought possible.

From the beginning of our research, I have been aware of this tremendous personal power in LSD. You must be very careful to take it only with someone you know really well, because it's almost inevitable that a woman will fall in love with the man who shares her LSD experience. Deep and lasting neurological imprints, profound emotional bonds, can develop as a result of an LSD session—bonds that can last a lifetime. For this reason, I have always been extremely cautious about running sessions with men and women. We always try to have a subject's husband or wife present during his or her first session, so that as these powerful urges develop, they are directed in ways that can be lived out responsibly after the session.

PLAYBOY: Are you preaching psychedelic monogamy?

LEARY: Well, I can't generalize, but one of the great lessons I've learned from LSD is that every man contains the essence of all men and every woman has within her *all* women. I remember a session a few years ago in which, with horror and ecstasy, I opened my eyes and

looked into the eyes of my wife and was pulled into the deep blue pools of her being floating softly in the center of her mind, experiencing everything that she was experiencing, knowing every thought that she had ever had. As my eyes were riveted to hers, her face began to melt and change. I saw her as a young girl, as a baby, as an old woman with gray hair and scamy, wrinkled face. I saw her as a witch, a Madonna, a nagging crone, a radiant queen, a Byzantine virgin, a tired, worldly-wise Oriental whore who had seen every sight of life repeated a thousand times. She was *all* women, *all* woman, the essence of female—eyes smiling, quizzically, resignedly, devilishly, always inviting: "See me, hear me, join me, merge with me, keep the dance going." Now, the implications of this experience for sex and mating, I think, are obvious. It's because of this, not because of moral restrictions or restraints, that I've been extremely monogamous in my use of LSD over the last six years.

PLAYBOY: When you speak of monogamy, do you mean complete sexual fidelity to one woman?

LEARY: Well, the notion of running around trying to find different mates is a very low-level concept. We are living in a world of expanding population in which there are more and more beautiful young girls coming off the assembly line each month. It's obvious that the sexual criteria of the past are going to be changed, and that what's demanded of creatures with our sensory and cellular repertoire is not just one affair after another with one young body after another, but the exploration of the incredible depths and varieties of your own identity with a single member of the opposite sex. This involves time and commitment to the voyage.

PLAYBOY: Do you mean to imply that you've had only one bed partner in the last six years?

LEARY: I've had more than one long-term relationship during this period. But there is a certain kind of neurological and cellular fidelity that develops. I have said for many years now that in the future the grounds for divorce would not be that your wife went to bed with another man and bounced around on a mattress for an hour or two, but that your wife had an LSD session with somebody else, because the bonds and the connections that develop are so powerful.

PLAYBOY: It's been reported that when you are in the company of women, quite a lot of them turn on to you. As a matter of fact, a friend of yours told us that you could have two or three different women every night if you wanted to. Is he right?

LEARY: For the most part, during the last six years, I have lived very quietly in our research centers. But on lecture tours and in highly enthusiastic social gatherings,

there is no question that a charismatic public figure does generate attraction and stimulate a sexual response.

PLAYBOY: How often do you return this response?

LEARY: Every woman has built into her cells and tissues the longing for a hero—sage—mythic male to open up and share her own divinity. But casual sexual encounters do not satisfy this deep longing. Any charismatic person who is conscious of his own mythic potency awakens this basic hunger in women and pays reverence to it at the level that is harmonious and appropriate at the time. Compulsive body grabbing, however, is rarely the vehicle of such communication.

PLAYBOY: Do you disapprove of the idea of casual romance—catalyzed by LSD?

LEARY: Well, I'm not one to tell anyone else what to do. But I would say, if you use LSD to make out sexually in the seductive sense, then you'll be a very humiliated and embarrassed person, because it's just not going to work. On LSD, her eyes would be microscopic, and she'd see very plainly what you were up to, coming on with some heavy-handed, mustache-twisting routine. You'd look like a consummate ass, and she'd laugh at you, or you'd look like a monster and she'd scream and go into a paranoid state. Nothing good can happen with LSD if it's used crudely or for power or manipulative purposes.

PLAYBOY: Suppose you met a girl at a party, developed an immediate rapport, and you both decided to share an LSD trip that same night. Could it work under those circumstances?

LEARY: You must remember that in taking LSD with someone else, you are voluntarily relinquishing all of your personality defenses and opening yourself up in a very vulnerable manner. If you and the girl are ready to do this, there would be an immediate and deep rapport if you took a trip together. People from the LSD cult would be able to do it upon a brief meeting, but an inexperienced person would probably find it extremely confusing, and the people might become quite isolated from each other. They might be whirled into the rapture or confusion of their own inner workings and forget entirely that the other person is there.

PLAYBOY: According to some reports, LSD can trigger the acting out of latent homosexual impulses in ostensibly heterosexual men and women. Is there any truth to that, in your opinion?

LEARY: On the contrary, the fact is that LSD is a specific cure for homosexuality. It's well known that most sexual perversions are the result not of biological binds but of freaky, dislocating childhood experiences of one kind or another. Consequently, it's not surprising that we've had many cases of long-term homosexuals who, under LSD, discover that they are not only genitally but genet-

ically male, that they are basically attracted to females. The most famous and public of such cases is that of Allen Ginsberg, who has openly stated that the first time he turned on to women was during an LSD session several years ago. But this is only one of many such cases.

PLAYBOY: Has this happened with Lesbians?

LEARY: I was just going to cite such a case. An extremely attractive girl came down to our training center in Mexico. She was a Lesbian and she was very active sexually, but all of her energy was devoted to making it with girls. She was at an LSD session at one of our cottages and went down to the beach and saw this young man in a bathing suit and—flash!—for the first time in her life the cellular electricity was flowing in her body and it bridged the gap. Her subsequent sexual choices were almost exclusively members of the opposite sex.

For the same reasons, LSD is also a powerful panacea for impotence and frigidity, both of which, like homosexuality, are symbolic screw-ups. The LSD experience puts you in touch with the wisdom of your body, of your nervous system, of your cells, of your organs. And the closer you get to the message of the body, the more obvious it becomes that it's constructed and designed to procreate and keep the life stream going. When you're confronted with this basic cellular fact under LSD, you realize that your impotency, or your frigidity, is caused by neuropsychological hang-ups of fear or shame that make no sense to your cells, that have nothing to do with the biochemical forces inside your body urging you to merge and mate with a member of the opposite sex.

PLAYBOY: Does LSD always work as a sexual cure-all?

LEARY: Certainly not. LSD is no guarantee of any specific social or sexual outcome. One man may take LSD and leave wife and family and go off to be a monk on the banks of the Ganges. Another may take LSD and go back to his wife. It's a highly individual situation. Highly unpredictable. During LSD sessions, you see, there can come a microscopic perception of your routine social and professional life. You may discover to your horror that you're living a robot existence, that your relationships with your boss, your wife and your family are stereotyped, empty and devoid of meaning. At this point, there might come a desire to renounce this hollow existence, to collect your thoughts, to go away and cloister yourself from the world like a monk while you figure out what kind of a life you want to go back to, if any.

Conversely, we've found that in giving LSD to members of monastic sects, there has been a definite tendency for them to leave the monastic life and to find a mating relationship. Several were men in

their late 40s who had been monks for 15 or 20 years, but who even at this mature age returned to society, married and made the heterosexual adjustment. It's not coincidental that of all those I've given LSD to, the religious group—more than 200 ministers, priests, divinity students and nuns—has experienced the most intense sexual reaction. And in two religious groups that prize chastity and celibacy, there have been wholesale defections of monks and nuns who left their religious orders to get married after a series of LSD experiences. The LSD session, you see, is an overwhelming awakening of experience; it releases potent, primal energies, and one of these is the sexual impulse, which is the strongest impulse at any level of organic life. For the first time in their lives, perhaps, these people were meeting head on the powerful life forces that they had walled off with ritualized defenses and self-delusions.

PLAYBOY: A great deal of what is said about LSD by its proponents, including you, has been couched in terms of religious mysticism. You spoke earlier, in fact, of discovering "divinity" through LSD. In what way is the LSD experience religious?

LEARY: It depends on what you mean by religion. For almost everyone, the LSD experience is a confrontation with new forms of wisdom and energy that dwarf and humiliate man's mind. This experience of awe and revelation is often described as religious. I consider my work basically religious, because it has as its goal the systematic expansion of consciousness and the discovery of energies within, which men call "divine." From the psychedelic point of view, almost all religions are attempts—sometimes limited temporally or nationally—to discover the inner potential. Well, LSD is Western yoga. The aim of all Eastern religion, like the aim of LSD, is basically to get high: that is, to expand your consciousness and find ecstasy and revelation within.

PLAYBOY: Dr. Gerald Klee, of the National Institute of Mental Health, has written: "Those who say LSD expands consciousness would have the task of defining the terms. By any conventional definition, I don't think it does expand the consciousness." What do you think?

LEARY: Well, he's using the narrow, conventional definition of consciousness that psychiatrists have been taught: that there are two levels of consciousness—sleep and symbolic normal awareness. Anything else is insanity. So by conventional definition, LSD does *not* expand symbolic consciousness; thus, it creates psychosis. In terms of his conventional symbol game, Dr. Klee is right. My contention is that his definition is too narrow, that it comes from a deplorable, primitive and superstitious system of consciousness. My system of conscious-

ness—attested to by the experience of hundreds of thousands of trained voyagers who've taken LSD—defines *many* different levels of awareness.

PLAYBOY: What are they?

LEARY: The lowest level of consciousness is sleep—or stupor, which is produced by narcotics, barbiturates and our national stuporfactant, alcohol. The second level of consciousness is the conventional wakeful state, in which awareness is hooked to conditioned symbols: flags, dollar signs, job titles, brand names, party affiliations and the like. This is the level that most people—including psychiatrists—regard as reality; they don't know the half of it. There is a third level of awareness, and this is the one that I think would be of particular interest to **PLAYBOY** readers, because most of them are of the younger generation, which is much more sensual than the puritanical Americans of the older generation. This is the sensory level of awareness. In order to reach it, you have to have something that will turn off symbols and open up your billions of sensory cameras to the billions of impulses that are hitting them. The chemical that opens the door to this level has been well known for centuries to cultures that stress delicate, sensitive registration of sensory stimulation: the Arab cultures, the Indian cultures, the Mogul cultures. It is marijuana. There is no question that marijuana is a sensual stimulator—and this explains not only why it's favored by young people but why it arouses fear and panic among the middle-aged, middle-class, whiskey-drinking, bluenosed bureaucrats who run the narcotics agencies. If they only knew what they were missing.

But we must bid a sad farewell to the sensory level of consciousness and go on to the fourth level, which I call the cellular level. It's well known that the stronger psychedelics such as mescaline and LSD take you *beyond* the senses into a world of cellular awareness. Now, the neurological fact of the matter is that every one of your 13 billion brain cells is hooked up to some 25,000 other cells, and everything you know comes from a communication exchange at the nerve endings of your cells. During an LSD session, enormous clusters of these cells are turned on, and consciousness whirls into eerie panoramas for which we have no words or concepts. Here the metaphor that's most accurate is the metaphor of the microscope, which brings into awareness cellular patterns that are invisible to the naked eye. In the same way, LSD brings into awareness the cellular conversations that are inaudible to the normal consciousness and for which we have no adequate symbolic language. You become aware of processes you were never tuned in to before. You feel yourself sinking down into the soft tissue swamp of your own body,

slowly drifting down dark red waterways and floating through capillary canals, softly propelled through endless cellular factories, ancient fibrous clockworks—ticking, clicking, chugging, pumping relentlessly. Being swallowed up this way by the tissue industries and the bloody, sinewy carryings-on inside your body can be an appalling experience the first time it happens to you. But it can also be an awesome one—fearful, but full of reverence and wonder.

PLAYBOY: Is there a fifth level of awareness?

LEARY: Yes, and this one is even more strange and terrifying. This is the *precellular* level, which is experienced only under a heavy dosage of LSD. Your nerve cells are aware—as Professor Einstein was aware—that all matter, all structure, is pulsating energy; well, there is a shattering moment in the deep psychedelic session when your body, and the world around you, dissolves into shimmering latticeworks of pulsating white waves, into silent, subcellular worlds of shuttling energy. But this phenomenon is nothing new. It's been reported by mystics and visionaries throughout the last 4000 years of recorded history as "the white light" or the "dance of energy." Suddenly you realize that everything you thought of as reality or even as life itself—including your body—is just a dance of particles. You find yourself horribly alone in a dead, impersonal world of raw energy feeding on your sense organs. This, of course, is one of the oldest Oriental philosophic notions, that nothing exists except in the chemistry of your own consciousness. But when it first really happens to you, through the experience of LSD, it can come as a terrorizing, isolating discovery. At this point, the unprepared LSD subject often screams out: "I'm dead!" And he sits there transfigured with fear, afraid to move. For the experienced voyager, however, this revelation can be exalting: You've climbed inside Einstein's formula, penetrated to the ultimate nature of matter, and you're pulsing in harmony with its primal, cosmic beat.

PLAYBOY: Has this happened to you often during a session?

LEARY: It's happened to me about half of the 311 times I've taken LSD. And every time it begins to happen, no matter how much experience you've had, there is that moment of terror—because nobody likes to see the comfortable world of objects and symbols and even cells disintegrate into the ultimate physical design.

PLAYBOY: Do you think there may be a deeper level of consciousness beyond the precellular?

LEARY: I hope so. We know that there are many other levels of energy within and around us, and I hope that within our lifetimes we will have these opened up to us, because the fact is that there

is no form of energy on this planet that isn't recorded somewhere in your body. Built within every cell are molecular strands of memory and awareness called the DNA code—the genetic blueprint that has designed and executed the construction of your body. This is an ancient strand of molecules that possesses memories of every previous organism that has contributed to your present existence. In your DNA code, you have the genetic history of your father and mother. It goes back, back, back through the generations, through the eons. Your body carries a protein record of everything that's happened to you since the moment you were conceived as a one-cell organism. It's a living history of every form of energy transformation on this planet back to that thunderbolt in the Pre-Cambrian mud that spawned the life process over two billion years ago. When LSD subjects report retrogression and reincarnation visions, this is not mysterious or supernatural. It's simply modern biogenetics.

PLAYBOY: Tell us more about these visions.
LEARY: Well, we don't know how these memories are stored, but countless events from early and even intra-uterine life are registered in your brain and can be flashed into consciousness during an LSD experience.

PLAYBOY: Do you merely remember them, or do you actually relive them?

LEARY: The experiences that come from LSD are actually relived—in sight, sound, smell, taste and touch—exactly the way they happened before.

PLAYBOY: If it's an experience from very early life, how can you be sure it's a true memory rather than a vivid hallucination?

LEARY: It's possible to check out some of these ancient memories, but for the most part these memory banks, which are built into your protein cellular strands, can never be checked on by external observation. Who can possibly corroborate what your nervous system picked up before your birth, inside your mother? But the obvious fact is that your nervous system was operating while you were still in the uterus. It was receiving and recording units of consciousness. Why, then, is it surprising that at some later date, if you have the chemical key, you can release these memories of the nine perilous and exciting months before you were born?

PLAYBOY: Can these memory visions be made selective? Is it possible to travel back in time at will?

LEARY: Yes, it is. That happens to be the particular project that I've been working on most recently with LSD. I've charted my own family tree and traced it back as far as I can. I've tried to plumb the gene pools from which my ancestors emerged in Ireland and France.

PLAYBOY: With what success?

LEARY: Well, there are certain moments in my evolutionary history that I can

reach all the time, but there are certain untidy corners in my racial path that I often get boxed into, and because they are frightening, I freak out and open my eyes and stop it. In many of these sessions, back about 300 years, I often run across a particular French-appearing man with a black mustache, a rather dangerous-looking guy. And there are several highly eccentric recurrent sequences in an Anglo-Saxon country that have notably embarrassed me when I relived them in LSD sessions—goings on that shocked my 20th Century person.
PLAYBOY: What sort of goings on?

LEARY: Moments of propagation—scenes of rough ancestral sexuality in Irish bar-rooms, in haystacks, in canopied beds, in covered wagons, on beaches, on the moist jungle floor—and moments of crisis in which my forebears escape from fang, from spear, from conspiracy, from tidal wave and avalanche. I've concluded that the imprints most deeply engraved in the neurological memory bank have to do with these moments of life-affirming exultation and exhilaration in the perpetuation and survival of the species.

PLAYBOY: But how can you be sure they ever happened?

LEARY: You can't. They may all be nothing more than luridly melodramatic Saturday serials conjured up by my forebrain. But whatever they are—memory or imagination—it's the most exciting adventure I've ever been involved in.

PLAYBOY: In this connection, according to a spokesman for the student left, many former campus activists who've gone the LSD route are "more concerned with what's happening in their heads than what's happening in the world." Any comment?

LEARY: There's a certain amount of truth in that. The insight of LSD leads you to concern yourself more with internal or spiritual values; you realize that it doesn't make any difference what you do on the outside unless you change the inside. If all the Negroes and left-wing college students in the world had Cadillacs and full control of society, they would still be involved in an anthill social system unless they opened themselves up first.

PLAYBOY: Aren't these young ex-activists among an increasing number of students, writers, artists and musicians whom one critic has called "the psychedelic dropouts"—LSD users who find themselves divested of motivation, unable to readjust to reality or to resume their roles in society?

LEARY: There is an LSD dropout problem, but it's nothing to worry about. It's something to cheer. The lesson I have learned from over 300 LSD sessions, and which I have been passing on to others, can be stated in six syllables: Turn on, tune in, drop out. "Turn on" means to contact the ancient energies and wisdoms that are built into your nervous

system. They provide unspeakable pleasure and revelation. "Tune in" means to harness and communicate these new perspectives in a harmonious dance with the external world. "Drop out" means to detach yourself from the tribal game. Current models of social adjustment—mechanized, computerized, socialized, intellectualized, televised, Sanforized—make no sense to the new LSD generation, who see clearly that American society is becoming an air-conditioned anthill. In every generation of human history, thoughtful men have turned on and dropped out of the tribal game, and thus stimulated the larger society to lurch ahead. Every historical advance has resulted from the stern pressure of visionary men who have declared their independence from the game: "Sorry, George III, we don't buy your model. We're going to try something new"; "Sorry, Louis XVI, we've got a new idea. Deal us out"; "Sorry, L. B. J., it's time to mosey on *beyond* the Great Society."

The reflex reaction of society to the creative dropout is panic and irritation. If anyone questions the social order, he threatens the whole shaky edifice. The automatic, angry reaction to the creative dropout is that he will become a parasite on the hard-working, conforming citizen. This is not true. The LSD experience does not lead to passivity and withdrawal; it spurs a driving hunger to communicate in new forms, in better ways, to express a more harmonious message, to live a better life. The LSD cult has already wrought revolutionary changes in American culture. If you were to conduct a poll of the creative young musicians in this country, you'd find that at least 80 percent are using psychedelic drugs in a systematic way. And this new psychedelic style has produced not only a new rhythm in modern music but a new decor for our *discothèques*, a new form of film making, a new kinetic visual art, a new literature, and has begun to revise our philosophic and psychological thinking.

Remember, it's the college kids who are turning on—the smartest and most promising of the youngsters. What an exciting prospect: a generation of creative youngsters refusing to march in step, refusing to go to offices, refusing to sign up on the installment plan, refusing to climb aboard the treadmill.

PLAYBOY: What will they do?

LEARY: Don't worry. Each one will work out his individual solution. Some will return to the establishment and inject their new ideas. Some will live underground as self-employed artists, artisans and writers. Some are already forming small communities out of the country. Many are starting schools for children and adults who wish to learn the use of their sense organs. Psychedelic businesses are springing up: bookstores, art galleries. Psychedelic industries may involve

more manpower in the future than the automobile industry has produced in the last 20 years. In our technological society of the future, the problem will be not to get people to work, but to develop graceful, fulfilling ways of living a more serene, beautiful and creative life. Psychedelics will help to point the way.

PLAYBOY: Concerning LSD's influence on creativity, Dr. B. William Murphy, a psychoanalyst for the National Institute of Mental Health, takes the view that there is no evidence "that drugs of any kind increase creative potency. One unfortunate effect is to produce an illusion dangerous to people who are creative, who cease then to be motivated to produce something that is genuinely new. And the illusion is bad in making those who are not creative get the idea that they are." What's your reaction?

LEARY: It's unfortunate that most of the scientific studies on creativity have been done by psychologists who don't have one creative bone in their body. They have studied people who by definition are emphatically uncreative—namely, graduate students. Is it any wonder that all the "scientific" studies of LSD and creativity have shown no creative results? But to answer your question, I must admit that LSD and marijuana do not allow you to walk to the piano and ripple off great fugues. Psychedelic drugs, particularly marijuana, merely enhance the senses. They allow you to see and hear new patterns of energy that suggest new patterns for composition. In this way, they enhance the creative perspective, but the ability to convert your new perspective, however glorious it may be, into a communication form still requires the technical skill of a musician or a painter or a composer.

But if you want to find out whether LSD and marijuana have helped creative people, don't listen to a psychiatrist; don't listen to a Government bureaucrat. Find the artist and ask *him*. If you want to find out about creativity, ask the creative person. If you want to know what LSD does, and whether it's good or bad, don't listen to a cop; don't listen to messianic fanatics like Timothy Leary. Find some friend who has taken LSD and ask *him*. He's the person to believe—because you'll know how likely he is to distort things—and then you'll be able to judge on the basis of his statements what LSD has done for him. Then ask other friends about their experiences. Base your opinion about LSD on a series of such interviews, and you will have collected more hard data than any of the public health officials and police officers who are making daily scare statements to the press these days.

PLAYBOY: Are any of these scare statements true? According to a recent report on narcotics addiction published by the Medical Society of the County of New York, for example, "those with unsta-

ble personalities may experience LSD-induced psychoses." Is that true?

LEARY: In over 3000 people that I have personally observed taking LSD, we've had only four cases of prolonged psychoses—a matter of, say, two or three weeks after the session. All of these had been in a mental hospital before, and they were people who could not commit themselves to any stable relationship. And all of these people had nothing going in their lives. They were drifting or floating, with no home or family or any roots, no stable, ongoing life situation to return to. It's dangerous to take a trip if you have no internal trust and no external place to turn to afterward.

PLAYBOY: The same New York Medical Society report also stated that "normal, well-adjusted persons can undergo an acute psychotic break under the influence of LSD." Is there any truth to that?

LEARY: Everyone, normal or neurotic, experiences some fear and confusion during the high-dose LSD session. The outcome and duration of this confusion depends upon your environment and your traveling companions. That's why it's tremendously important that the LSD session be conducted in a protected place, that the person be prepared and that he have an experienced and understanding guide to support and shield him from intrusion and interruption. When unprepared people take LSD in bad surroundings, and when there's no one present who has the skill and courage to guide them through it, then paranoid episodes are possible.

PLAYBOY: Will you describe them?

LEARY: There are any number of forms a paranoid episode can take. You can find yourself feeling that you've lived most of your life in a universe completely of your own, not really touching and harmonizing with the flow of the people and the energies around you. It seems to you that everyone else, and every other organism in creation, is in beatific communion, and only you are isolated by your egocentricity. Every action around you fits perfectly into this paranoid mosaic. Every glance, every look of boredom, every sound, every smile becomes a confirmation of the fact that everyone knows that you are the only one in the universe that's not swinging lovingly and gracefully with the rest of the cosmic dance. I've experienced this myself.

I've also sat with hundreds of people who have been panicked because they were trapped at the level of cellular reincarnation, where they looked out and saw that their body had scales like a fish or felt that they had turned into an animal. And I've sat with people who were caught on the fifth level, in that eerie, inhuman world of shuttling vibrations. But all these episodes can be dealt with easily by an experienced guide who recognizes where the LSD tripper is caught. He can bring you back down

quite simply by holding a candle in front of you, or getting you to concentrate on your breathing, or having you lie down and getting you to feel your body merging with the mattress or the floor. If he understands the map of consciousness, it's very easy to bring you back to a more recognizable and less frightening level. With his help, you'll be able to exult in and learn from the experience.

If he's frightened or uncomprehending, however, or if he acts so as to protect his own social interests, your own terror and confusion are naturally increased. If he treats you as a psychotic rather than as one who is seriously groping with basic problems that you should be encouraged to face and work through, you may be forced into a psychotic state. Every case of prolonged LSD psychosis is the fault not of the drug nor of the drug taker but of the people around him who lose their cool and call the cops or the doctors. The lesson here is to fear neither LSD nor your own psychological nature—which is basically OK—but to fear the diagnosing mind of the psychiatrist. Ninety percent of the bad LSD trips are provoked by psychiatric propaganda, which creates an atmosphere of fear rather than of courage and trust. If the psychiatrists had their way, we'd *all* be patients.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of patients, a recent *Time* essay reported that a survey in Los Angeles "showed as many as 200 victims of bad trips in the city's hospitals at one time." Does that sound to you like a realistic figure?

LEARY: I'd like to know who conducted that survey and where they got their figures, because it's contradicted by the known facts. I was recently told by the director of a large California hospital, which handles LSD cases, that most LSD panic subjects are given a tranquilizer and sent home without even being admitted. The same is true at Bellevue and throughout the country.

PLAYBOY: In the same essay, *Time* wrote: "Under the influence of LSD, nonswimmers think they can swim, and others think they can fly. One young man tried to stop a car on Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard and was hit and killed. A magazine salesman became convinced that he was the Messiah." Are these cases, and others like them, representative reactions to LSD, in your opinion?

LEARY: I would say that one case in 10,000 is going to flip out and run out into the street and do something bizarre. But these are the cases that get reported in the papers. There are 3000 Americans who die every year from barbiturates and it never hits the papers. Thousands more die in car crashes and from lung cancer induced by smoking. That isn't news, either. But one LSD kid rushes out and takes off his clothes in the street and it's headlines in the *New York Daily*

News. If one nut who's a member of the narcotics squad from the Los Angeles police force gets drunk and climbs into an airplane and threatens the pilot, that's no reason for grounding all airplanes, calling alcohol illegal, outlawing guns and dissolving the narcotics bureau of the Los Angeles police force. So one episode out of 10,000 LSD cases is no reason for any kind of hand wringing and grandmotherly panic.

PLAYBOY: A recent case of this nature involved a young man who contended that he killed his mother-in-law while he was on LSD. Isn't that a cause for concern?

LEARY: Yes—but only because this one episode has led to some psychiatrists and police calling LSD a homicidal drug. Actually, there's no evidence that that unfortunate boy ever took LSD. He was obviously attempting a cop-out when he talked to the police about it afterward.

PLAYBOY: There have also been reports of suicide under the influence of LSD. Does this happen?

LEARY: In 23 years of LSD use, there has been one definite case of suicide during the LSD session. This was a woman in Switzerland who'd been given LSD without her knowledge. She thought she was going crazy and jumped out of the window. But it wasn't that the LSD poisoned her. The unexpected LSD led to such panic and confusion that she killed herself. There have been other rumors about LSD panics leading to suicide, but I am waiting for the scientific evidence. In more than a million LSD cases, there haven't been more than one or two documented cases of homicide or suicide attributable to the LSD experience.

PLAYBOY: Though it hasn't led to any reported deaths, a number of LSD panics have been attributed to the experience of many users, in the midst of a session, that they're about to have a heart attack. Is this a common occurrence?

LEARY: Fairly common. When somebody says to us in an LSD session, "My heart's going to stop!" we say, "OK, fine. That's a new experience, nothing to be afraid of. Let it stop." There is no physiological change in your heart, but the experience is that the heart is stopping. On LSD, you see, you may actually hear the thump of your heartbeat. You become aware of its pulsing nerves and muscle fibers straining for the next beat. How can they possibly do this over and over again? If you're unprepared for it, this can become a terror that it cannot continue. Because of LSD's distention of the time dimension, you may wait what seems like five hours for the second beat. Then you wait again, and you wait, and you are aware of the millions of cells that must be tiring out; they may not have the strength to beat again. You're afraid that your heart is going to burst. Then finally—thump! At last! But did it come slower this time? Is it stopping? You feel the blood throbbing in your

heart. You feel the ventricles opening and closing; there's a hole in your heart! The blood is flooding your body! You're drowning in your own blood! "Help! Get me a doctor!" you may shout. If this kind of episode occurs, of course, all that's necessary to allay your fears are a few words of understanding and reassurance from an experienced guide and companion, who should be with you at all times.

PLAYBOY: Dr. Jonathan Cole, of the National Institute of Mental Health, has said that psychedelic drugs "can be dangerous. . . . People go into panic states in which they are ready to jump out of their skins. . . . The benefits are obscure." What do you say?

LEARY: Based on the evidence that Dr. Cole has had at hand, he is justified in saying that. Dr. Cole undoubtedly has never taken LSD himself. He *has* sponsored research that has been done—indeed, must be done—in mental hospitals, under psychiatric supervision. But this is the worst possible place to take LSD. Take LSD in a nuthouse and you'll have a nuthouse experience. These poor patients are usually not even told what drugs they're given; they're not prepared. I consider this psychological rape. So I'm not surprised that the cases Dr. Cole has heard about from his researchers are negative.

But Dr. Cole doesn't listen to the hundreds of thousands of people who have taken LSD under intelligent, aesthetic, carefully planned circumstances and have had their lives changed for the better. He doesn't receive the hundred letters a week that I receive from people who are profoundly grateful to have been dramatically opened up by LSD. He hears only the horror stories. If you talk to a mortician, you'll come to the conclusion that everyone who is of any importance is dead. If you talk to a law-enforcement officer, you'll find that practically everyone is a criminal, actual or potential. And if you talk to a psychiatrist, you'll hear nothing but gloomy lexicons of psychopathology. What Dr. Cole thinks about LSD is irrelevant, because for every case that his Federal researchers have studied, there are 5000 serious-minded, courageous young laymen out in the universities and out in the seminaries and in their own homes and on the beaches who are taking LSD and having fantastically beautiful experiences.

PLAYBOY: When you testified in May before a Senate subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency and drugs, you took your teenage son and daughter along. Why not Mrs. Leary?

LEARY: The mother of my two children died in 1955.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you marry again?

LEARY: Yes—to a beautiful model named Mena. The LSD session I described earlier was with her.

PLAYBOY: To return to your children: Have you allowed or encouraged them to use marijuana and LSD?

LEARY: Yes. I have no objection to them expanding their consciousness through the use of sacramental substances in accord with their spiritual growth and well-being. At Harvard, in Mexico and here at Millbrook, both of my children have witnessed more psychedelic sessions than any psychiatrist in the country.

PLAYBOY: At most of the psychedelic sessions you've conducted in the course of research, as you've said elsewhere, you and your associates have turned on with your subjects—and not in the laboratory but on beaches, in meadows, living rooms and even Buddhist temples. In the opinion of most authorities, this highly unconventional therapeutic technique is not only impractical but irrational and irresponsible. How do you justify it?

LEARY: This sort of criticism has ruined my reputation in conventional research circles, but it simply betrays ignorance of the way LSD works. You have to take it with your patient—or at least to have taken it yourself—in order to empathize with and follow him as he goes from one level to another. If the therapist has never taken it, he's sitting there with his sticky molasses Freudian psychiatric chessboard attempting to explain experiences that are far beyond the narrow limits of that particular system.

PLAYBOY: You've also been criticized for being insufficiently selective in the screening of subjects to whom you've administered LSD.

LEARY: We have been willing and eager to run LSD sessions with anyone in any place that made collaborative sense to me and the subject. We've never given LSD to anyone for our own selfish purposes, or for selfish purposes of his own; but if any reasonably stable individual wanted to develop his own consciousness, we turned him on. This ruined our reputation with scientists, of course, but it also made possible a fantastically successful record: 99 percent of the people who took LSD with us had fabulous experiences. None of our subjects flipped out and went to Bellevue; they walked out of the session room with messianic gleams in their eyes.

PLAYBOY: Even if only one percent of your subjects had bad experiences, is it worth the risk?

LEARY: That question can be answered only by the individual. When men set out for Plymouth in a leaky boat to pursue a new spiritual way of life, of course they were taking risks. But the risks of the voyage were less than the risks of remaining in a spiritual plague area, immobilized from the possibility of change by their fears of taking a risk. No Government bureau or Big Brother doctor can be allowed to decide who is going to take the risks involved in this 20th Century voyage of spiritual discovery.

PLAYBOY: Yet restrictive and prohibitive laws against the use of LSD have already been passed in California, Nevada and New Jersey, and several members of Congress have urged Federal legislation outlawing its manufacture or possession.

LEARY: Such laws are unrealistic and unconstitutional. Over 15 percent of college students are currently using LSD. Do the hard-arteried politicians and police types really want to put our brightest and most creative youngsters in prison for possession of a colorless, odorless, tasteless, nonaddictive, mind-opening substance? Irrational, senile legislation preventing people from pursuing private, intimate experiences—sexual or spiritual—cannot and will not be obeyed. We are currently planning to appeal any conviction for possession of LSD on constitutional grounds. But the Federal Government is opposed to laws penalizing possession of LSD, because it recognizes the impossibility of enforcement and the unconstitutionality of such statutes. Of course, this ambiguous situation is temporary. In 15 years, the bright kids who are turning on now will be shaping public opinion, writing our novels, running our universities and repealing the hysterical laws that are now being passed.

PLAYBOY: In what way are they hysterical?

LEARY: They're hysterical because the men who are passing them have allowed their ignorance of LSD to escalate into irrationality. Instinctively, they put LSD in the same bag with heroin. They think of drug taking as a criminal activity practiced by stuporous escapists and crazed, deranged minds. The daily diatribes of police officials and many legislators to that effect completely ignore the fact that the use of LSD is a white-collar, upper-middle-class, college-educated phenomenon. The LSD user is not a criminal type. He's not an underground character or a junkie. He doesn't seek to hide, or to apologize for, his activities. But while more and more laws are being passed restricting these activities, more and more people are engaging in them. LSD is being manufactured by people in their own homes and in small laboratories. If this continues, in ten years the LSD group will constitute one of our largest minorities. Then what are the lawmakers going to do?

PLAYBOY: What *should* they do, in your opinion?

LEARY: As they learn more about LSD, I think—I hope—they will recognize that there will have to be special legislation. There *should* be laws about the manufacture of LSD. It is incredibly powerful and can be a frightening experience. It is not a narcotic and not a medical drug; it doesn't cure any illness. It is a new form of *energy*. Just as a new form of legislation had to be developed for radioactive isotopes, so will there need to be something comparable for LSD. And

I think some LSD equivalent of the Atomic Energy Commission and some special licensing procedures should be set up to deal with this new class of drugs.

PLAYBOY: What sort of procedures would you recommend?

LEARY: You can't legalize and control manufacture until you've worked out a constructive way of licensing or authorizing possession. There are many individuals who should be provided with a legitimate access to chemicals that expand their minds. If we don't do this, we'll have a free market or a black market. During Prohibition, when alcohol was prohibited, it was suppressed; then you had bathtub gin and bootleg poisons of all sorts. The Government received no taxes and the consumer had no guarantee that what he was buying was safe and effective. But if marijuana and LSD were put under some form of licensing where responsible, serious-minded people could purchase these chemicals, then the manufacture could be supervised and the sales could be both regulated and taxed. A healthy and profitable situation would result for all involved.

PLAYBOY: How would a person demonstrate his responsibility and serious-mindedness in applying for a license?

LEARY: The criteria for licensing the use of mild psychedelics like marijuana should be similar to those for the automobile license. The applicant would demonstrate his seriousness by studying manuals, passing written tests and getting a doctor's certificate of psychological and physical soundness. The licensing for use of powerful psychedelic drugs like LSD should be along the lines of the airplane pilot's license: intensive study and preparation, plus very stringent testing for fitness and competence.

PLAYBOY: What criteria would you use for determining fitness and competence?

LEARY: No one has the right to tell anyone else what he should or should not do with this great and last frontier of freedom. I think that anyone who wants to have a psychedelic experience and is willing to prepare for it and to examine his own hang-ups and neurotic tendencies should be allowed to have a crack at it.

PLAYBOY: Have you had the opportunity to present this plan to the Federal Narcotics Bureau?

LEARY: I would be most happy to, but the Narcotics people don't want any sort of objective, equal-play consideration of these issues. When anyone suggests the heretical notion that LSD be made available to young people, or even hints, let us say, at the necessity for scientific evaluation of marijuana, he is immediately labeled as a dangerous fanatic and is likely to be investigated. This certainly has been demonstrated by reactions of people asked to contribute to my legal defense fund. There are hundreds who have contributed but who realistically cannot afford to have their names

involved in such a case, because they believe public identity may lead to investigatory persecution.

PLAYBOY is among the rare institutions that will tackle an issue of this sort. There is an enormous amount of peripheral harassment. For example, I couldn't get bail bond after my indictment in Laredo, and I had to put up cash. This issue has generated so much hysteria that the normal processes of democratic debate are consistently violated. When several million Americans can't have their voices heard and can't get objective and scientific consideration of their position, I think that the Constitution is in danger.

PLAYBOY: There are some who see the appeal of your conviction in Laredo as a step leading to legalization of marijuana. Do you think that's possible?

LEARY: If I win my case in the higher courts—and my lawyers believe I will—this will have wide implications. It will suggest that future arrests for marijuana must be judged on the merits of the individual case rather than a blanket, arbitrary implementation of irrational and excessive regulation. I consider the marijuana laws to be unjust laws. My 30-year sentence and \$30,000 fine simply pointed up in a rather public way the severity and harshness of the current statutes, which are clearly in violation of several amendments to the Constitution.

PLAYBOY: Which amendments?

LEARY: The First Amendment, which guarantees the right of spiritual exploration; and the Fifth Amendment, which guarantees immunity from self-incrimination. The fact that I'm being imprisoned for not paying a tax on a substance that, if I had applied for a license, would have led to my automatic arrest, is clearly self-incrimination. The current marijuana statutes are also in violation of the Eighth Amendment, which forbids cruel and unusual punishments; and of the Ninth Amendment, which guarantees certain personal liberties not specifically enumerated in the other amendments.

PLAYBOY: The implications of your arrest and conviction in Laredo were still being debated when the police raided your establishment here in Millbrook. We've read several different versions of just what took place that night. Will you give us a step-by-step account?

LEARY: Gladly. On Saturday, April 16th, there were present at our center in Millbrook 29 adults and 12 children. Among them were three Ph. D. psychologists, one M.D. psychiatrist, three physicists, five journalists on professional assignments and three photographers. At one-thirty A.M., all but three guests had retired. I was in bed. My son and a friend of his were in the room talking to me about a term paper that my son was writing. We heard a noise outside in the hallway. My son opened the door, slammed it and said, "Wow, Dad, there's about fifty cops out there!" I jumped out of bed and was in the middle of the room when the

door burst open and two uniformed sheriffs and two assistant district attorneys marched in and told me not to move. I was wearing only pajama tops.

One of the sheriff's statements to the press was that the raiding party discovered most of the occupants in the house in a state of semi-undress—which sounds pretty lurid until you realize that almost everyone in the house was in bed asleep at the time of the raid. After the initial shock of finding armed and uniformed men in our bedrooms, all of my guests reacted with patience, humor and tolerance to five hours of captivity. The members of the raiding party, on the other hand, were extremely nervous. It's obvious that they had in mind some James Bond fantasy of invading the Oriental headquarters of some sexual SMERSH, and they were extremely jumpy as they went about their search of the entire house. One interesting aspect of the raid was that all of the women present were stripped and searched.

PLAYBOY: Did anyone object?

LEARY: We objected to *everything* that was being done, including the fact that we could not have a lawyer present.

PLAYBOY: What did the police find during the search?

LEARY: After a five-hour search, they arrested four people: a photographer here on a professional assignment, and a Hindu holy man and his wife—all of whom they alleged had marijuana in their possession—and myself. There was no claim that I had any marijuana in my possession or control; the charge involved my being the director of the house.

PLAYBOY: Did they have a warrant?

LEARY: They had a warrant, but we claim it was defective and illegal.

PLAYBOY: In what way?

LEARY: In the Bill of Rights it clearly states that the Government cannot just swear out a warrant to go into anyone's house on general suspicion and speculation. Specifically, a search warrant can be issued only on the basis of tangible evidence, usually from an informer, that a specific amount of defined, illegal substance is present at a certain place and time. There was no such probable cause for the raid at Millbrook. Among the "causes" cited was that cars with out-of-state licenses were parked in my driveway, and that girls under the age of 16 were playing around the yard on a certain day when it was under surveillance.

PLAYBOY: How would that be a cause?

LEARY: How, indeed? Another alleged "cause" for the raid was that I am "a known and admitted trafficker in drugs." Well, none of these espionage reports seem to me—or to my lawyers—to justify the issuance of a no-knock, nighttime warrant that authorized the breaking of windows and doors to obtain entry to a private house.

PLAYBOY: What is the current status of the charges against you?

LEARY: We are now involved in nine pieces of litigation on this raid. The American Civil Liberties Union has entered the case with a supporting brief, and while I can't comment on the technicalities of the litigation, we have a large group of bright young turned-on civil libertarian lawyers walking around with smiles on their faces.

PLAYBOY: Do you mean that your lawyers are on LSD?

LEARY: I don't feel I should comment on that. Let me say, however, that you don't need to *use* anything to be turned on, in the sense that you've tuned in to the world.

PLAYBOY: Dr. Humphrey Osmond of the New Jersey Neuropsychiatric Institute—the man who coined the word "psychedelic"—has described you as "Irish and revolutionary, and to a good degree reckless." He was suggesting that if you had been more careful, you might not have been arrested in Laredo or Millbrook.

LEARY: I plead guilty to the charges of being an Irishman and a revolutionary. But I don't think I'm careless about anything that's important.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't it careless to risk the loss of your freedom by carrying a half ounce of marijuana into Mexico?

LEARY: Well, that's like saying: Wouldn't it be careless for a Christian to carry the Bible to Russia? I just can't be bothered with paranoid ideas about wire tapping, surveillance and police traps. It's been well known for several years that I'm using psychedelic drugs in my own home and in my own center for the use of myself and my own family. So at any time the Government wanted to make an issue of this, it certainly could. But I can't live my life in secrecy or panic paranoia. I've never bothered to take a lot of elementary precautions, for example, about my phone being bugged or my actions being under surveillance—both of which the police admit. I would say that if there was carelessness in Laredo, it was carelessness on the part of the Government officials in provoking a case that has already changed public attitudes and will inevitably change the law on the possession and use of marijuana by thoughtful adults in this country. The Narcotics Bureau is in trouble. I'm not.

PLAYBOY: But suppose all appeals fail and you do go to prison. What will happen to your children and to your work?

LEARY: My children will continue to grow—externally and internally—and they and all of my friends and colleagues will continue to communicate what they've learned to a world that certainly needs such lessons. As to where and how they will live, I can't predict.

PLAYBOY: Have you made any provision for their financial support?

LEARY: At the present time I'm \$40,000 in debt for legal expenses, and I have made no provisions for eating lunch tomorrow. But we'll cross that bridge

when we come to it.

PLAYBOY: Do you dread the prospect of imprisonment?

LEARY: Well, I belong to one of the oldest trade unions in human civilization—the alchemists of the mind, the scholars of consciousness. The threat of imprisonment is the number-one occupational hazard of my profession. Of the great men of the past whom I hold up as models, almost every one of them has been either imprisoned or threatened with imprisonment for their spiritual beliefs: Gandhi, Jesus, Socrates, Lao-tse. I have absolutely no fear of imprisonment. First of all, I've taken LSD over 40 times in a maximum-security prison as part of a convict rehabilitation project we did in Boston; so I know that the only real prisons are *internal*. Secondly, a man who feels no guilt about his behavior has no fear of imprisonment; I have not one shred of guilt about anything I've done in the last six years. I've made hundreds of mistakes, but I've never once violated my own ethical or moral values. I'm the freest man in America today. If you're free in mind and heart, you're not in trouble. I think that the people who are trying to put other people in jail and to control basic evolutionary energies like sex and psychedelic chemicals are in trouble, because they're swimming upstream against the two-billion-year tide of cellular evolution.

PLAYBOY: What would you say is the most important lesson you've learned from your personal use of LSD?

LEARY: First and last, the understanding that basic to the life impulse is the question, "Should we go on with life?" This is the only real issue, when you come down to it, in the evolutionary cosmic sense: whether to make it with a member of the opposite sex and keep it going—or not to. At the deepest level of consciousness, this question comes up over and over again. I've struggled with it in scores of LSD sessions. How did we get here and into this mess? How do we get out? There are two ways out of the basic philosophic isolation of man: You can ball your way out—by having children, which is immortality of a sort. Or you can step off the wheel. Buddhism, the most powerful psychology that man has ever developed, says essentially that. My choice, however, is to keep the life game going. I'm Hindu, not Buddhist.

Beyond this affirmation of my own life, I've learned to confine my attention to the philosophic questions that hit on the really shrieking, crucial issues: Who wrote the cosmic script? What does the DNA code expect of me? Is the big genetic-code show live or on tape? Who is the sponsor? Are we completely trapped inside our nervous systems, or can we make *real* contact with anyone else out there? I intend to spend the rest of my life, with psychedelic help, searching for the answers to these questions—and en-

couraging others to do the same.

PLAYBOY: What role do you think psychedelics will play in the everyday life of the future?

LEARY: A starring role. LSD is only the first of many new chemicals that will exhilarate learning, expand consciousness and enhance memory in years to come. These chemicals will inevitably revolutionize our procedures of education, child rearing and social behavior. Within one generation, through the use of these chemical keys to the nervous system as regular tools of learning, you will be asking your children, when they come home from school, not "What book are you reading?" but "Which molecules are you using to open up new Libraries of Congress inside your nervous system?" I don't know if there'll ever be courses in Marijuana 1A and 1B, as a prerequisite to LSD 101, but there's no doubt that chemicals will be the central method of education in the future. The reason for this, of course, is that the nervous system, and learning and memory itself, is a chemical process. A society in which a large percentage of the population changes consciousness regularly and harmoniously with psychedelic drugs will bring about a very different way of life.

PLAYBOY: Will there be a day, as some science-fiction writers predict, when people will be taking trips, rather than drinks, at psychedelic cocktail parties?

LEARY: It's happening already. In this country, there are already functions at which LSD may be served. I was at a large dance recently where two thirds of the guests were on LSD. And during a scholarly LSD conference in San Francisco a few months ago, I went along with 400 people on a picnic at which almost everyone turned on with LSD. It was very serene: They were like a herd of

deer in the forest.

In years to come, it will be possible to have a lunch-hour psychedelic session; in a limited way, that can be done now with DMT, which has a very fast action, lasting perhaps a half hour. It may be that there will also be large reservations, of maybe 30 or 40 square miles, where people will go to have LSD sessions in tranquil privacy.

PLAYBOY: Will the psychedelic experience become universal? Will everyone be turned on?

LEARY: Well, not all the time. There will always be some functions that require a narrow form of consciousness. You don't want your airplane pilot flying higher than the plane and having Buddhist revelations in the cockpit. Just as you don't play golf on Times Square, you won't want to take LSD where narrow, symbol-manipulating attention is required. In a sophisticated way, you'll attune the desired level of consciousness to the particular surrounding that will feed and nourish you.

No one will commit his life to any single level of consciousness. Sensible use of the nervous system would suggest that a quarter of our time will be spent in symbolic activities—producing and communicating in conventional, tribal ways. But the fully conscious life schedule will also allow considerable time—perhaps an hour or two a day—devoted to the yoga of the senses, to the enhancement of sensual ecstasies through marijuana and hashish; and one day a week to completely moving outside the sensory and symbolic dimensions into the transcendental realms that are open to you through LSD. This is not science-fiction fantasy. I have lived most of the last six years—until the recent unpleasantness—doing exactly that: taking LSD once a week and smoking

marijuana once a day.

PLAYBOY: How will this psychedelic regimen enrich human life?

LEARY: It will enable each person to realize that he is not a game-playing robot put on this planet to be given a Social Security number and to be spun on the assembly line of school, college, career, insurance, funeral, goodbye. Through LSD, each human being will be taught to understand that the entire history of evolution is recorded inside his body; the challenge of the complete human life will be for each person to recapitulate and experientially explore every aspect and vicissitude of this ancient and majestic wilderness. Each person will become his own Buddha, his own Einstein, his own Galileo. Instead of relying on canned, static, dead knowledge passed on from other symbol producers, he will be using his span of 80 or so years on this planet to live out every possibility of the human, prehuman and even subhuman adventure. As more respect and time are diverted to these explorations, he will be less hung up on trivial, external pastimes. And this may be the natural solution to the problem of leisure. When all of the heavy work and mental drudgery are taken over by machines, what are we going to do with ourselves—build even bigger machines? The obvious and only answer to this peculiar dilemma is that man is going to have to explore the infinity of inner space, to discover the terror and adventure and ecstasy that lie within us all.



